

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

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AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3890

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: NEW RIGHT WING COALITION TO FORM UNDER AEGIS
GENERAL DESLANDES

SUMMARY: ALLIANCE OF FIVE EXISTING RIGHT WING PARTIES
SOON TO BE ANNOUNCED. ALLIANCE WILL ALLEGEDLY ENJOY SUPPORT
OF TWENTY RETIRED FLAG-LEVEL OFFICERS AND BE LED BY FORMER
CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES, GEN. VENANCIO DESLANDES.
END SUMMARY.

1. ENG. CAMILO ANTONIO DE ALMEIDA MENDONCA, PROMINENT
FARMER IN NORTHEAST PORTUGAL, FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT OF EXTINGUISHED
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND PRESIDENT OF THE UNIAO NACIONAL'S
(PRECURSOR OF ANP) POLITICAL STUDIES CENTER, CALLED ON
EMBOFF SEPTEMBER 9 IN ORDER TO INFORM USG OF NEW RIGHT
WING COALITION ABOUT TO FORM.

2. ACCORDING TO MENDONCA, WHO IS PRINCIPAL ORGANIZER
OF NEW COALITION BUT WHO WILL NOT FORM PART OF ITS DIRECTORATE,
COALITION WILL BE CALLED ALIANCA DOS PORTUGUESES PARA O
PROGRESSO SOCIAL. IT WILL INCLUDE FOUR SMALL PARTIES,
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TWO SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND TWO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC:

PARTIDO SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSD); PARTIDO SOCIAL DEMOCRATA INDEPENDENTE (PSDI); PARTIDO SOCAIL DEMOCRATA CRISTA (PDC); AND PARTIDO CRISTAO SOCIAL-DEMOCRATA (PCSD). THE FAR RIGHT GROUP KNOWN AS MOVIMENTO POPULAR PORTUGUESE (MPP) WILL ALSO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE ALLIANCE.

3. MENDONCA CLAIMS THAT WHEN ALLIANCE LAUNCHED IN NEXT 10 DAYS IT WILL HAVE SUPPORT OF 300 PROMINENT CONSERVATIVES FROM OPORTO, COIMBRA AND LISBON. AMONG SUPPORTERS WILL BE 20 RETIRED FLAG-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS AND 70 UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS. LEADER OF ALLIANCE ALLEGED TO BE RETIRED GENERAL VENANCIO AUGUSTO DESLANDES, CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES BEFORE COSTA GOMES, A HARDLINE SALAZARIST, AND FERVENT ANTI-COMMUNIST. MENDONCA EXPECTS OTHER PROMINENT INDEPENDENTS WILL ASSOCIATE WITH ALLIANCE IN FUTURE.

4. STRAGETY OF ALLIANCE WILL BE TO CONCENTRATE ON RURAL NORTH, WHERE THEY EXPECT ELECTION WILL BE WON AMONG CONSERVATIVE FARMERS. THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL GET BULK OF THIS VOTE BECAUSE THE 300 ALLIANCE SUPPORTERS ARE WELL KNOWN AND RESPECTED BY LOCAL LEADERS, PRIESTS AND SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NORTH AND CAN DELIVER THE LOCAL VOTE. MENDONCA SAYS THAT FORMER ANP LEADERS WILL NOT ASSOCIATE WITH ALLIANCE AT THIS STAGE, SINCE THEY WISH TO AVOID FOR NEW THE ATTACKS FROM THE LEFT WHICH WOULD ENSUE WERE THE COALITION LINKED TO THE ANP. AT A LATER STAGE, HOWEVER, FORMER ANP MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO ADHERE OPENLY.

5. COMMENT: MENDONCA IS A SHREWD, WELL-INFORMED AND ABLE POLITICIAN WHO HAS MANY PROMINENT FRIENDS STILL IN POSITIONS OF POWER. HE BELIEVES THAT THE LEFT IS THE WANE, AND THE RIGHT ON THE COMEBACK ROAD. EVENTS IN MOZAMBIQUE IN HIS VIEW WILL RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN SPINOLA'S POWER AND A CORRESPONDING DISSOLUTION OF THE LEFTIST COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. HE BELIEVES THAT THE ARMY'S UNWILLINGNESS TO SQUELCH THE REVOLT IN MOZAMBIQUE WILL MAKE UDI A STRONG PROABILITY IN AGNOLA. HE ALS PREDICTS A COUP IN PORTUGAL WITHIN THE MONTH TO OUST PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES AND THOSE LEFTISTS IN THE GOVERNMENT WHO

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HAVE PUSHED SOHARD AND FAST FOR WHAT HE TERMS THE "GIVEAWAY" IN MOZAMBIQUE AND GUINEA.

6. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW SUCCESSFUL MENDONCA'S ALLIANCE WILL BE IN ACHIEVING ITS GOAL OF CAPTURING THE CONSERVATIVE NORTHERN VOTE. HOWEVER THE COMPONENT PARTIES HAVE LARGELY EXISTED UP TO NOW ON PAPER ONLY, AND WILL MEET STIFF COMPETITION IN THE NORTH FROM THE CDS AND THE PARTIDO PROGRESSO

WHICH ACCORDING TO OUR CONSUL IN OPORTO ARE ACTIVE IN THE AREA.
THESE LATTER PARTIES LACK NATIONALLY KNOWN LEADERS. IF THE NEW
ALLIANCE CAN IN FACT GET SUCH LEADERS ON ITS SIDE, IT MAY GIVE
THE CDS AND THE PARTIDO DE PROGRESO A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY FOR
SUPPORT OF CONSERVATIVES.
SCOTT

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